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25X1**TOP SECRET****Strategic Warning Staff**

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21 December 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: A/NIO/W

FROM : Strategic Warning Staff

*Please return*

Before going on leave, Mr. MacEachin asked [ ] to wrap up any recent information on Southeast Asia and provide it to you. Attached are two memoranda [ ]

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Attachments

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TALENT-KEYHOLE-COMINT  
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**Strategic Warning Staff**

Washington, D.C. 20301

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21 December 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: A/NIO/W

FROM : Strategic Warning Staff

SUBJECT : Thai-Kampuchean Border Update; Chinese Connection

1. It is our impression that the conventional wisdom among Community analysts is that there is small if any likelihood of a Chinese "second lesson" against Vietnam, whatever may develop as a result of the current Vietnamese offensive in the Thai-Kampuchean border area. There are nevertheless some worrisome signs that the Chinese may be undertaking more extensive preparations than generally has been recognized. Not the least of our concern is our uncertainty with regard to the real state of the Community's knowledge of what the Chinese military posture is in the SRV-PRC border area, and what the Chinese have been up to in recent months.

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Should China decide to initiate some action in the south, its forces would be better prepared and more readily mobilized than they were prior to the last war.

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6. The Sino-Vietnamese border situation remains tense. Border clashes continue and the latest Chinese protest to the Vietnamese over such provocations, on November 20th, included the same final sentence that was used by the PRC shortly before the last invasion. Additional reporting reflects the possibility of Chinese action:

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8. While we continue to see an improved military posture in the border area and note the continued tense situation and political concern, we do not have evidence of massive troop movement or buildup required to in fact teach Vietnam a second lesson. We believe, however, that China has reason not to deploy troops as openly as they did for the last invasion, and that they would use surprise to a greater advantage. They have said as much:

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9. Like most other analysts in the Community, I have difficulty believing China will initiate a second lesson. However, most of us did not believe China would attack last time. I provide the following figures, not to contest community estimates, but to promote discussion of them. I can be reached on [redacted]

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10. Against the above background we provide a high-estimate border forces total [redacted] which could reach the border approximately within a two-week period.

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